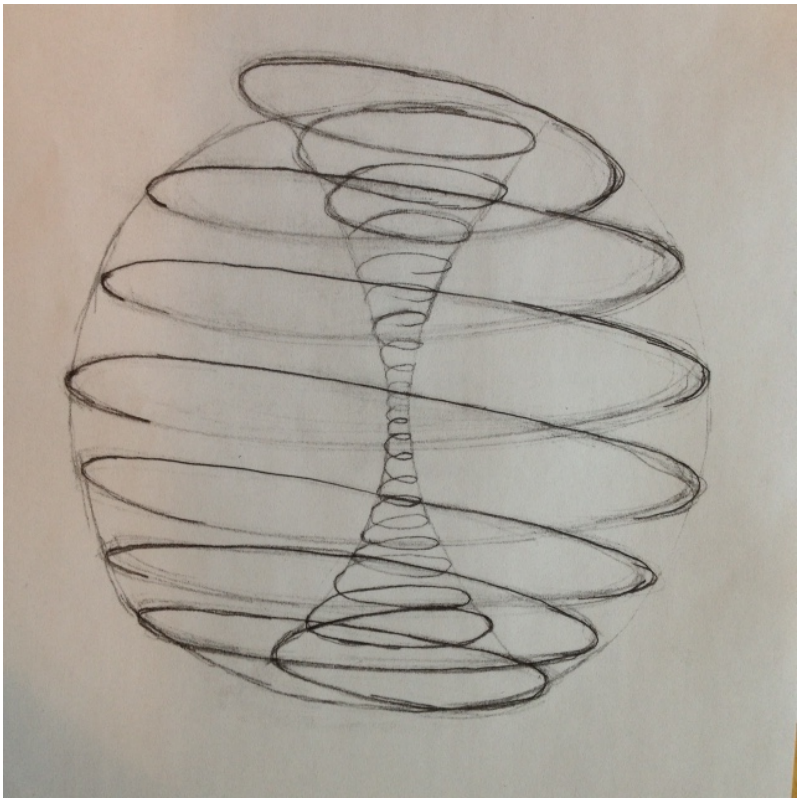
Centering Meditation

Rev. Roy Reynolds
September 4, 2019

Preliminary Notes: *This meditation emerged today, influenced by several teachers, especially Robert Sardello, Alan Rayner, and Jessica Dibb. There is also an associated image – that I call the "Spiral Torus" – that can assist you in imagining the spatial sensation of Body-Heart-Mind presence.*



This image helps me imagine and feel centered in an inviting surrounding field of spatial embrace. The spiral pathways (in this image) form a trace left by one's peripheral bodily sensed awareness. Think of this as similar in effect to walking a labyrinth. Hold that effect in your body as you center with belly breathing meditation and attentive awareness.

The breath pattern becomes the "stream" on which you float with inner awareness. Hold in mind that each breath can bring both a sense of deepening into Mother Earth and an opening to the Heavens. Soul presence is the "feeling body of touch" that forms the "in-between" space of life presence. The Spiral Path formed by breath work is sensed as a visceral-peripheral touch of "deepening" (into Earth) and "opening" (into the Heavens). These movements are mutual and complementary: in and out. In their pulsing presence, contemplation forms the effect of becoming centered in Heart Space, centered in heart's warm, inviting field of feeling (Agape, Empathy), while also feeling held within the inviting-creative openness of embracing space (i.e., welcoming, inviting, breathing space). Heart Space is inviting, vital, and liberating.

NB: *The following version of the Centering Meditation includes orientation commentary. A complete version of this meditation (without commentary notes) can be found immediately following this introductory orientation.*

Preparing for Centering Meditation

Set aside about 25 minutes for the full cycle of relaxing into meditation, experiencing contemplative presence, and then letting yourself slowly emerge from the experience. Notice how you feel.

It helps me to light a candle as I begin my meditation.

I choose a comfortable chair and sit erect with eyes closed, hands on my thighs, and body relaxed.

I start by simply noticing the sense of touch: my back, my hands, my arms, my buttocks, my legs, and the soles of my feet.

With each breath I continue to release and relax any tension that is evident.

NB: *Now, here I offer words to guide you through this meditation. You will eventually become able to guide yourself with your preferred words. You will soon notice that contemplative meditative awareness includes sensing, feeling, and inner perceiving.*

The Centering Meditation ***(Including Orientation Commentary).***

Become centered in the slow cycle of breathing, bringing your attention to the belly that expands with each in-breath, just as a baby breathes.

Drop all distracting thoughts with each breath cycle. Release thought into breath, guided by the very silence of “being breathed.”

Attend to the slow, relaxed body-breath movement and become centered in meditative presence.

To begin your inner meditation's guidance, slowly, silently inner gesture "Sense” (placing attention on your belly, the balance center of your body), then gesture “Feel” (placing attention on your chest area), and then “Attend” (placing attention on your forehead).

Sense
Feel
Attend

*(**NB:** Note that "placing of your attention" is an imaginal act. It helps to imagine with attention.)*

Repeat this cycle a few times as you continue to center into meditation.

*(**NB:** If thoughts arise, drop them into your breath and release them. If feeling the spatial field brings images of spatial presence, let that help you further relax into the "here-ness" of this space: this place which is open and infinite as an always-present surround.*

Simply be in this space - this place of presence - as you breathe, sense, feel, and attend. You are orienting to openness with bodily presence. Sense the openness. Feel the expanse of spatial openness, receiving you and holding you.)

As you notice the in-breath, notice your belly expand and contract.
Be with this for a few breath cycles.

As you notice the belly breath, hold that breath longer and breathe into your chest (noticing, feeling, sensing the Heart Center). Breathe fully and intentionally attending to belly, then into your chest.
Do this for a few times.

Now, as you notice belly breath, breathe further in bringing the breath up to your Heart Center; and keep breathing up to your throat. Slowly relax and notice your throat opening to allow a fuller breath. Sense the inner feeling of your breath channel.

Do this for a few times.

Now, as you belly breathe, breathe into your Heart Center, then into your throat (letting your chin lift), and then further up to your head. Breathe into your brain. Pause to notice.

Now release and do that again in your next breath cycle.

*(**NB:** You are awakening and energizing the Three Spiritual Centers of your body: Belly, Heart, and Mind, i.e., your Center of Attention).*

Now draw your awareness fully to this process of full breathing: Belly, Heart, Attention.

You are here centered in Body, Heart, and Mind.

As you continue (in a relaxed and attentive way), breathe with awareness.

Allow your awareness to awaken to the larger embracing field with which you are attuning. Proceed gracefully, attentively.
This embracing field extends down from your breathing body into the Earth Body.

This field reaches out through your Heart Center to the surrounding space of presence.

This field reaches up through the top of your head to the Heavens.

Yet, you are fully here: breathing, sensing, feeling,… aware.
You are Rooted (in breathing with Earth presence).
You are Expanded (in Heart's Large Embrace)
You are Open (in Spatial Presence).

Be here.
Breathe here.
Sense here.
Feel here.
Imagine here.

Breathe in centered presence. Be here with patience, receiving grace.
When you feel ready to complete this practice, pause. Acknowledge silently the qualities and presences you feel and are breathing and flowing with you.

Then open your eyes, while pausing for another mindful moment. Notice what you feel; and note the availability of this mode of presence that is "always here."

Complete your meditation with the feel of appreciation, and by snuffing out the candle.

Remain attentive to your body, your breath, and your calm, awakened awareness.

This completes your centering meditation.

NB: The following meditation is the complete Centering Meditation without the inserted orientation comments.

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NB: And a suggestion. *You can similarly enter this meditation practice outdoors, with your eyes open and all senses attending. One nature contemplation that I find helpful and beautiful is a Tree Canopy meditation. Enter the space of the canopy with your outer senses, and then allow yourself to feel and image into what the natural canopy evokes in your inner awareness. Enjoy.*